

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listing of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims

1.-15. (Canceled)

16. (Currently Amended) An automatic analyzer comprising:

an analysis unit for analyzing specimens;

a plurality of common racks holding patient specimens to be sampled for analysis by the analysis unit;

a plurality of specific racks holding specific liquids to be repeatedly sampled as needed for analysis of the patient specimens by the analysis unit;

a rack supply section ~~supplying that supplies the common racks holding patient specimens to be sampled for analysis by the analysis unit and the specific racks to be used in analysis by the analysis unit holding specific liquids to be repeatedly sampled as needed for analysis of the patient specimens;~~

a rack feed line, connected to the rack supply ~~line~~ section, that receives the common racks and the specific racks from the rack supply section;

a rack standby disk, connected to the rack feed line, ~~receiving- that receives the common and specific racks from the rack feed line and supplies the common racks and specific racks to the analysis unit;~~

a rack transfer means that transfers the common and specific racks from the rack standby disk to a specimen sampling position on the analysis unit and returns the common racks and the specific racks, from which the specimens and specific liquids have been sampled in the specimen sampling position, to the rack standby disk,

a rack recovery line, connected to the rack standby disk, for receiving that receives the common racks having been analyzed by the analysis unit from the rack standby disk;

a rack recovery section, connected to the rack recovery line, that receives the common racks having been analyzed by the analysis unit from the rack recovery line;

a control unit connected to the rack supply section, the rack feed line, the rack standby disk and the rack recovery line controlling transfer of the common racks and the specific racks from the rack supply section to the rack standby disk, controlling rotating and stopping of the rack standby disk in a state such that the ~~plurality of common racks~~ and the specific racks are made to stand by thereon in a mixed state, and controlling transferring of the common racks on the rack standby disk towards ~~a the~~ rack recovery section after treatment;

a reading device ~~provided for reading which reads~~ discriminating information of the common and the specific racks prior to the rack standby disk receiving the common and specific racks from the rack feed line, and disposed proximate to the rack feed line;

~~a rack transfer means that transfers the common and specific racks from the rack standby disk to a specimen sampling position on an analysis unit and returns the common and specific racks, from which the specimens and specific liquids have been sampled in the specimen sampling position, to the rack standby disk;~~

wherein said control unit controls transfer of the common racks and specific racks based on the discriminating information read by the reading device ~~so such~~ that the common racks are carried toward the rack recovery section after ~~treatment~~ having been analyzed by the analysis unit, and the specific racks are kept standing by on the rack standby disk ~~until a subsequent time of measurement of the specific rack~~.

17. (Previously Presented) The automatic analyzer according to claim 16, wherein said rack standby disk is disposed in a rack delivery unit.

18. (Previously Presented) The automatic analyzer according to claim 16, wherein a position of the rack standby disk for receipt of a pretreatment rack from the rack feed line in which a specimen is to be sampled and a position of the rack standby disk for carrying-out of an aftertreatment rack from which a specimen has been sampled are used in common.

19. (Previously Presented) The automatic analyzer according to claim 16, wherein said rack standby disk is disposed in an evaporation protecting chamber, in which air is maintained higher in humidity than an outside air.

20. (Previously Presented) The automatic analyzer according to claim 19, wherein said evaporation protecting chamber is provided with a humidifier having a humidity sensor, which

is operatively controlled to maintain an interior of the evaporation protecting chamber at a predetermined humidity or higher.

21. (Previously Presented) The automatic analyzer according to claim 16, wherein said rack feed line is further for transferring an emergency rack holding a patient specimen to be analyzed and the control unit controls transfer of the emergency rack to be received by said rack standby disk, and, when said rack standby disk holds the emergency rack, another one of the racks for which sampling and treatment of a specimen is being performed in said analysis unit, is suspended and temporarily returned onto the rack standby disk, wherein the emergency rack is transferred to the specimen sampling position on the analysis unit from the rack standby disk and returned to the rack standby disk after the sampling and treatment of the specimen, and wherein the suspended rack is then transferred to the specimen sampling position on the analysis unit from the rack standby disk so that the sampling and treatment of the specimen are resumed for the suspended rack.

22. (Currently Amended) An automatic analyzer comprising:

an analysis unit for analyzing specimens;

a plurality of common racks holding patient specimens to be sampled for analysis by the analysis unit;

a plurality of specific racks holding specific liquids to be repeatedly sampled as needed for analysis of the patient specimens by the analysis unit;

a rack supply section ~~for supplying that supplies the~~ common racks holding patient specimens ~~to be sampled for analysis by the analysis unit, and the~~ specific racks holding specific liquids ~~to be repeatedly sampled as needed for analysis of the patient specimens to be used in analysis by the analysis unit;~~

a rack feed line, connected to the rack supply ~~line~~section, ~~for transferring that transfers the~~ common racks and ~~the~~ specific racks from the rack supply section;

a rack standby disk, connected to the rack feed line, ~~receiving that receives the~~ common racks and ~~the~~ specific racks from the rack feed line, rotating and stopping in a state such that the plurality of common racks and specific racks are made to stand by thereon in a mixed state;

a rack recovery line ~~for receiving that receives the~~ common racks from the rack standby disk ~~and transferring the racks on the rack standby disk towards a rack recovery section;~~

a rack recovery section that receives the common racks from the rack recovery line;

a reading device ~~provided for reading which reads~~ discriminating information of the common racks and the specific racks prior to the rack standby disk receiving the common racks and ~~the~~ specific racks from the rack feed line, and disposed proximate to the rack feed line;

a rack transfer means ~~operating which operates~~ to transfer the common racks and the specific racks from the rack standby disk to a specimen sampling position on an analysis unit and to return the common racks and ~~the~~ specific racks, from which the specimens and specific liquids have been sampled in specimen sampling position, to the rack standby disk; and

a control unit controlling transfer of the common racks and ~~the~~ specific racks based on the discriminating information read by the reading device and after a ~~preceeding rack one of~~ either the common racks or specific racks is returned to the rack standby disk from the

specimen sampling position, ~~a subsequent rack~~ another one of either the common racks or specific racks is transferred to the sampling position via the rack transfer means.

23. (Currently Amended) The automatic analyzer according to claim 22, wherein the rack transfer means has at least one transfer passage, and

wherein said control unit controls transfer of the racks in a manner that so long as the sum of the number of racks actually held on the rack standby disk and the number of racks present on ~~transfer passages~~ the at least one transfer passage of the rack transfer means is smaller than the number of racks that can be held on the rack standby disk, ~~a fresh rack~~ either another common rack or specific rack from the rack supply section is received on the rack standby disk.

24. (Currently Amended) The automatic analyzer according to claim 22, wherein said analysis unit is one among multiple units including biochemical analysis units which analyze items of biochemical analysis and immunity analysis units which analyze items of immunity analysis, and said control unit controls transfer of the racks in a manner that when a one of the common racks holding a specimen, for which items of biochemical analysis and items of immunity analysis are to be analyzed, is received on the rack standby disk, the one of the common racks is transferred to the immunity analysis unit from the rack standby disk before being transferred to the biochemical analysis unit, and after the one of the common racks having been subjected to sampling and treatment of the specimen in the immunity analysis unit

is returned to the rack standby disk, the one of the common racks is transferred to a specimen sampling position on the biochemical analysis unit from the rack standby disk.

25. (Currently Amended) The automatic analyzer according to claim 22, wherein said control unit controls transfer of the racks in a manner that until re-measurement is decided on the basis of results of analysis of a specimen sampled at the analysis unit, ~~a-one of the common racks~~ having been subjected to sampling and treatment of the specimen is kept standing by on the rack standby disk, and when re-measurement is necessary, the one of the common racks having stood by is again transferred to the specimen sampling position on the analysis unit from the rack standby disk.